

What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost, until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

Luke 15 : 4-5

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This special number of the *Federation News Sheet* has been prepared at the request of the Executive Committee of the World's Student Christian Federation, in the hope that it will be used by national Movements as a means of examining themselves before God, and of rediscovering the tasks to which He is calling them at the present time.

ARE WE WILLING TO BEAR PERSONAL WITNESS?

JOHN DESCHNER

The question which forms the title of this article is the result of many heart-searching Federation discussions in recent months and years. My task is to share with you some of the content of that discussion, as an introduction to this *News Sheet*, and as an invitation for others to join in. It is a significant discussion for our future.

SOME CRITICAL VOICES

— “The Federation until now has mostly emphasized the intellectual side of its task. National Movements and local branches have tried to reach individuals in a personal way but are not always able to do so, and this is the root of the present crisis” (Orthodox member). A Scandinavian student asks simply whether the S.C.M. has “some kind of highly intellectual righteousness of its own”.

— “We take the faith and understanding of the individual student for granted. We often have not dealt seriously enough with the matter of nurturing the faith of the individual student. Analyses and critiques of ‘the university’, ‘the Church universal’, and ‘the social order’ surely point students and S.C.M.ers to larger issues. But these in themselves can also become *escapes* if the individual in his or her personal daily life is not confronted by the Gospel” (Asian secretary).

— “We highly appreciate the significant work which the Federation has undertaken in interpreting the Christian faith in political, cultural, and social areas, and it has thereby highly challenged our thinking. We by no means would favour lowering of standards in these undertakings. But this enterprise has dominated the work of the Federation, and our student leaders have frequently been confronted with problems defined in too general terms and without clear indication of the direction in which the solutions should be found. At times our students have returned to us from Federation conferences with less clarity on the problems than they had when they left. The discussion at these conferences has seldom been of particular help in preparing our student leaders for their ordinary daily tasks on the local level, because the

thinking has not been closely related to their concrete situations" (open letter from the Scandinavian delegation to the Nasrapur General Committee, 1952).

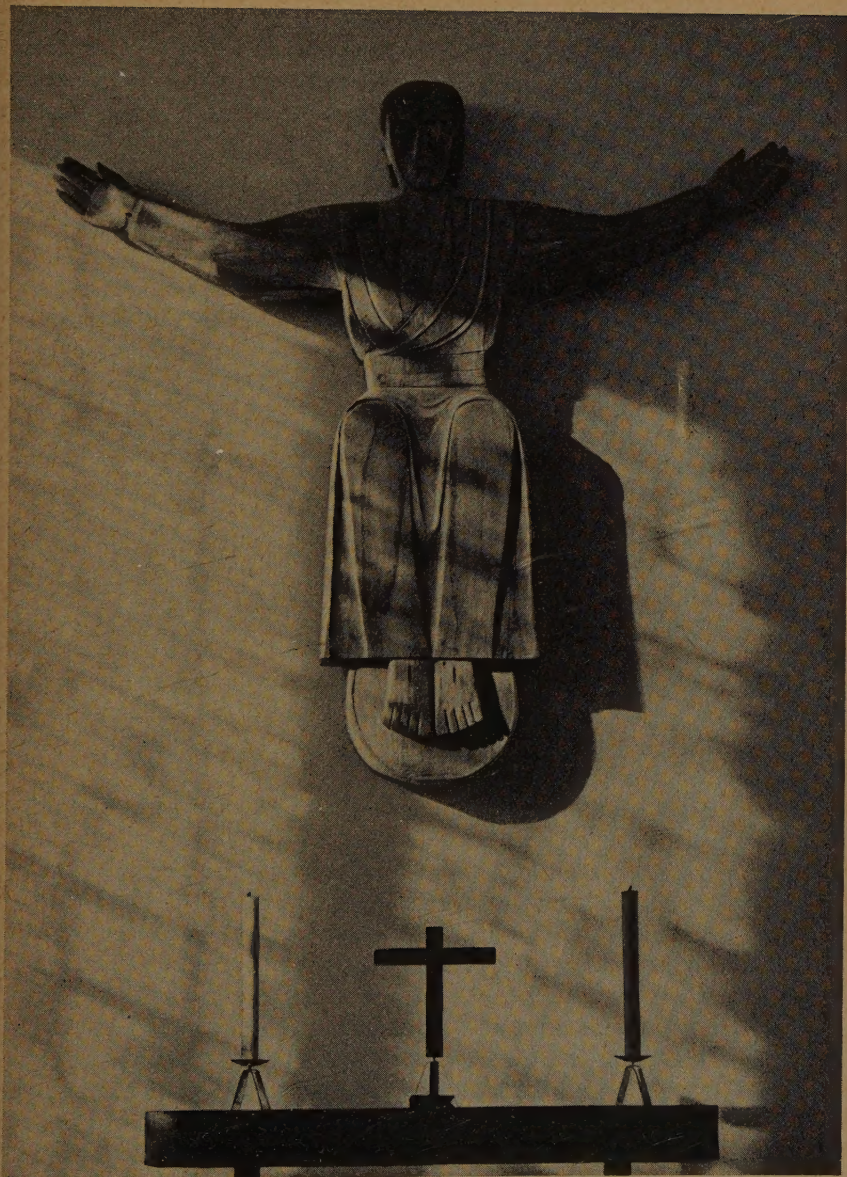
— "University studies often mean for the student a period of doubt. At this very moment the Church is not in a position to help him, and expects the S.C.M. to meet his religious needs. But the churches question whether the S.C.M. actually does this job. Our weakness as S.C.M.s has probably been our failure to realize that the Church was not able to perform this basic function of instruction and pastoral care to students, and our tendency to raise new questions and thus new doubts rather than to build up their faith and witness" (Asian pastor).

— "A great many students simply have no knowledge of, or commitment to, the Gospel, and they must learn about it before being able to understand the Federation concerns. We all want to be little Federations. As a result of the Federation's efforts, we tend to consider our responsibility only in the intellectual area" (American secretary).

— "Whatever action is undertaken with regard to our evangelistic responsibility, nothing will be achieved if individual members do not enter into this pastoral relationship with the people with whom they live. The point of greatest failure in all Movements, almost without exception, seems to lie here. That is to say, the Federation should emphasize continuously the *pastoral dimension* called for in all activities carried on by the S.C.M. or the Federation in all realms of their program" (Federation secretary).

— "The Federation seems to be in a state of ecumenical inertia. It causes far too little ecumenical disturbance. Local S.C.M.s are complacent . . . and find ecumenism almost completely irrelevant. They are petrified in their own ecclesiastical or organizational structures, and concerned only with living their own life and carrying on their own program. On the other hand, the Federation is basking in the theological sun of the World Council of Churches. It has stopped going ahead as a pioneer. The Federation might render a service to the ecumenical movement as a whole by reflecting seriously upon the challenge of the Inter-Varsity Fellowship" (former Federation secretary).

Do such statements adequately reflect the whole work of the Federation at present? Probably not. Attention is here focused on the study commissions, not, for example, on the work of Bible study, which is central to our program, and not on the extensive missionary work which



The Pantokrator (Christ the Almighty) in the new Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Trinity in Essen-Altenessen, Germany, by Helmuth Uhrig

has seen a tremendous extension and strengthening of S.C.M.s around the world in the last decade. Nevertheless, such statements are too frequent and widespread not to indicate a spiritual crisis of major proportions in Federation life. We all agree that "evangelism is our reason for existence, as an S.C.M.". But now the question arises: have we become so interested in creating a relevant and modern *language* for witness that we have forgotten that witness is essentially a *personal* matter?

A TWO-SIDED PROBLEM: WITNESS AND NURTURE

Let's try to state the two parts of our problem this way: 1) Our brother: is he to us first of all a *man*—to be sure, a man in the universality, or in political life, and not therefore the individualistic man of nineteenth century revivalism, but nevertheless, first of all a fellow human being, in whom all the problems we have analyzed so deeply have taken on a peculiar, characteristic shape in his own personality and situation? 2) Ourselves, as Christ's witnesses: are we first of all *men*, whose true humanity has been restored by God in Christ, who know what daily repentance and absolution mean, who have been changed in our ordinary human existence, and who, therefore, know there is something to say to our brother for Christ? Is our witness (which is not a special activity, but ought to be simply the character of our human life as Christians), whatever its language, a real sharing, living together, loving on this personal level?

More simply stated, we face the two-sided task of witness and nurture. Witness which doesn't drive us back to the sources of our own personal faith is abstract, and, therefore, false witness. But the reverse is also true: Christian nurture which doesn't drive us to share Christ with the man who is our brother, in whatever concrete language we can command, intellectual or not, is hardly worthy of the name "nurture". In short: unless our S.C.M. work leads to the point where men give and receive living testimony to Jesus, all our work is pointless.

Kyaw Than put it this way: "Talking to a student about his evangelistic task has little significance unless the individual student has the basis to respond, and has first been confronted by the Gospel in his personal life. Are we justified in simply assuming that this starting point is there? Can we speak of 'broadening' the Christian perspective (our Federation commissions) without keeping our attention at the same time on 'deepening' of the faith?"

HOW THE FEDERATION HAS RESPONDED

It is not that the Federation has wholly neglected this matter. Since the Whitby General Committee in 1949, with its famous commission on "The Student Milieu", we have repeatedly attempted to define where we're being led. The Chalet in 1950 studied "Men and Women"; the Chalet in 1951 "What is Man?"; the Nasrapur General Committee in 1952 devoted its first commission to "Our Pastoral Needs as Students", and adopted many of its suggestions for helping the Movements in this area, and the Chalet in 1952 studied "Pastoral Care". Issues of *The Student World* (for example, II, 1951 on "Man's Disorders"; II, 1952 on "Men and Women", and I, 1954 on "Pastoral Care"), *News Sheets* and special documents have tried to put our growing concern into words. And official minutes abound with practical decisions: the University Commission shall give special attention to the "pastoral dimension" of its work; issues of *The Student World* shall explore this theme; the discussion with the Inter-Varsity Movements shall be evaluated and taken up again; information is to be shared among Movements about pastoral questions; conferences of student pastors are to be organized; the task of doctrinal instruction is to receive special attention; a set of evangelistic booklets for use in university missions is being published, etc.

And still the definite impression remains, documented on many a page, that we are talking about more than "pastoral care", more than "counselling", more than specific student problems (as, for example, men and women), more than the theological issue "What is Man?".

And so the Executive has directed this special issue of the *News Sheet* to lay this question before the Movements in detail, hoping that we may find a fresh way of facing it at our next General Committee.

PERSONAL IN THE WHOLE SENSE OF THE WORD

The question, "Are we willing to bear personal witness?", is simply another attempt to define the central issue, but a surprising number of voices in this discussion agree in putting it. What is meant by it? Certainly not an individualism which can be played off against Christ's Lordship over all men and all things. Not a new show of "pietism", but genuine piety. Not an interiorization of the Gospel, but a personal involvement in the Gospel. Not a return to the Federation's past, but a faithful and courageous step ahead. Not a diversionary step away from

modern student life, but the next step into modern student life. The question of "personal witness" lies straight ahead of us, not behind us. It grows directly out of the point we have reached in understanding that "evangelism is the Federation's reason for existence". It is the next question, after we have heard our commission reports on the university, politics, ecumenism.

Is it too much to ask one word — "person" — to bear so much weight: an understanding of the individual in his wholeness, in his relationships and external life, but also — and this may be the point we have underemphasized — in his inner manhood, as one of whom Christ asks a decision, a change, a new direction? If that word doesn't do, someone must suggest another. The question, though, is clear enough: "Are we willing in a fully personal sense to bear witness to Jesus to other persons?"

THE SHAPE OF THE DISCUSSION

Is it yet possible to discern any shape in this discussion? I think so. In the last seven years many aspects of it have been touched upon, principally these: conversion, witness, nurture, student needs, student milieu, counselling, the theological foundation, the pastor, the pastoral community, and the S.C.M.'s relation to all of this. It seems to me evident that there are three fundamental terms here — conversion, witness, and nurture — and in what follows I shall try to orient the discussion in relation to them.

A fundamentally important fact emerges from the start: this way of putting the question throws the full weight of both our Federation concerns and the present question on to the S.C.M. *member*. He hasn't always been the centre of attention in the Federation, and we've frequently heard that much in the Federation — and even the S.C.M. — is incomprehensible to him. But the student member is the basic unit of the Federation! If *he* doesn't understand, does anyone, really?

We begin, then, with the student member squarely in the foreground, and we'll think, first, of the Gospel and the member, and the key word here is conversion. Then, about the member and student life, and here the key word is witness. And finally, we'll look at him as a member of Christ's Body, and the emphasis here is on nurture.

1. THE GOSPEL AND THE MEMBER

An open letter from the Scandinavian delegation at the Nasrapur General Committee said, in part: "The direction of the Federation discussion has been of assistance in helping us to understand the broader implications of our faith, and has been a necessary counterbalance to a one-sided individualistic emphasis.' But, sometime we ought to be permitted to talk directly and concretely about the individual student. We find it necessary for the Federation also to try to speak and think in terms of persons in the initial stages of their Christian life of faith. This is the problem which confronts us most of all in our countries in our daily work with students. We would refer to D. T. Niles' differentiation between proselytizing, evangelizing, and Christianizing. In our countries most of the students are nominal members of the Church, and have a fairly good knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith, but *the main task remains to lead the students to personal commitment and acceptance of Christ as Saviour.*"

"Conversion", for most of us in the West, has inescapable connections with a definite kind of religious emotion and experience. And most of us, influenced (too much ?) perhaps by depth psychology, have at least lurking suspicions about anything that depends so heavily on feelings as that. In the East "conversion" has been, on the whole, a more serious, costly business : it can mean losing family and friends, job and even civil rights. Can East lead West in the Federation to realize that this term refers to something precious and costly at the heart of Christianity, about which we had better learn to speak, again ?

Literally, "conversion" means "turning around". Let's underscore here not so much the human "experience" associated with it, as *what* we turn around, the Turning Point, Christ Himself. He confronts every one of us with a concrete invitation to change our particular direction, to walk in a particular new way, to lay aside particular impediments, and to get into the Christian race. Note well : Christ initiates this conversion ; its particularity comes wholly from Him. Conversion, then, is Christ's concrete demand for a change of direction addressed to, heard and obeyed by a student in all the peculiarity of his own personal situation. In this sense, Christ's demand for conversion of life is the heart of evangelism. And, though conversion definitely begins sometime, it is the *continuing* heart of Christian nurture in daily repentance, confession and absolution. Conversion, lived out in witness, confirmed and strengthened in Christian nurture, that is what

the life of the S.C.M. member points towards, and to the degree that it is realized, it is no longer an individual life, but the life of a member of Christ's Body—like a hand or a finger—and therefore useful.

When we speak about "evangelism as the Federation's reason for existence", hadn't we better have in mind this three-fold content for the term: conversion, witness and nurture? And we may ask: have we as a Federation assumed that we were all clear about conversion and nurture, and could devote our effort to trying to create for our witness a language (concerning the university, politics, etc.) which would be interesting and relevant to the modern secular student? That is certainly an important effort. But evangelism is more than a language, more than a "problem of communication". And if we have only assumed the other two aspects of our reason for existence, is it any wonder that our witness is often abstract and the Federation often incomprehensible?

2. THE MEMBER AND STUDENT LIFE

This leads us to the second point: witness. On this point the Federation has said a great deal in recent years, especially all we associate with the slogan: "Be in contact". An S.C.M. member writes: "At our small university we always have the danger of the S.C.M. being a cozy family circle, where it is nice to come together. We are too religious and pious. We regard everything that is secular as being a minor point." When it is nothing more, such religiosity is a victory for the world inside the Christian community. It is not too much to say that such an S.C.M. group is of the world, but not in it.

But, "our problem is not only of contact". Being "in the world" means being among people. Knowing how to speak of Christ to people is "the point of greatest failure in all our Movements". The shift of emphasis in recent discussions has been towards this point: being in contact, *with persons*. "It is one thing to give a person an understanding of the Christian faith and quite another to bear witness to Christ. Our problem is not only that of contact, but of communication" (statements from minutes of Officers' meetings).

And real contact with persons implies more attention to the specific concrete needs of students. "Any S.C.M. activity, whether of study or meeting or relationship, should lead to personal confrontation. We cannot be satisfied with our witness as long as we have not been able to meet human suffering, that is, personal loneliness, scepticism, despair,

enslavement to the self. Our fundamental task is love, and *therefore* witness" (Philippe Maury). It is at this point that all we have heard about student needs (*The Student World* on "Pastoral Care", I, 1954), student milieu, and student counselling becomes relevant for the task of witness.

Fully in the world, but not of the world.

3. MEMBER OF CHRIST'S BODY

But — and now we turn to nurture — this witness, precisely when it becomes personal, and therefore no longer abstract, makes demands on the Christian which he is by no means able to fulfil by himself. More likely than not, real witness means a crisis for his own faith. "Nurture" is the word which has come to apply to all that leads the Christian to receive the calling, the strength, the direction for witness.

"There is danger of the S.C.M. becoming a 'ghetto'. This is witness to the fact that S.C.M. members are not strong enough to be able to stand by themselves" (Australian secretary). "The main problem of our S.C.M. was where to get inner strength in work that had outward strength because it was done in favourable circumstances" (Scandinavian student). Here also belongs the criticism that "the Federation is too exclusively intellectual and emphasizes the responsibility of the mind rather than of the heart ; too little attention is given to personal piety. Some students feel that the 'evangelical' outlook does not have its proper place in the Federation" (South African member).

Effective personal witness presupposes — that is, can only take place on the ground of — corporate and private prayer, Bible study, doctrinal instruction, confession of sins and absolution, preaching of the Word, Sacraments ; in short, the living Church, guided by Her Head, Jesus Christ. The branch is not nourished apart from the vine ; the member is not useful apart from the Body ; the S.C.M. lives the life of the Church, or it has no life.

This is not the place for a full discussion of the difficult problem which is being raised here : whether the S.C.M. is the Church. The Mülheim consultation on "The S.C.M. and the World", speaking on its own behalf, and not necessarily for the Federation, said that our present understanding is basically right : "The S.C.M. is not a church, but its life is part of the life of the Church." But in a far-reaching commentary on this statement, Mülheim said, in effect, that the S.C.M. is a secular community, which in faith may receive through the Holy

Spirit the freedom to be a Christian community ; and further, refused to limit, on principle, the way in which the ministry of Word and Sacrament is to be exercised in the S.C.M. In so doing it recognized that some of the S.C.M.s regularly use the Sacraments in their own life.

Whatever our answer about the S.C.M. being the Church, this much must certainly be said : the S.C.M. member, so far as he participates in living, personal witness, can do so only as a member of Christ's Body, nourished by Its life, and participating in Its mission. And from this fact, new light falls on the importance which the S.C.M. must attach to church membership, on the importance of Word and Sacraments for the S.C.M., and therefore on the urgency of a more clear and adequate understanding of the S.C.M.'s relation to the Church. Just one of several practical questions will illustrate this urgency : is there any justification for the frequent present understanding that the Church is a place to go for Sacraments, while the S.C.M. provides the primary Christian fellowship for the Christian student ? Must not the primary Christian fellowship arise where Word and Sacrament are present, if our fellowship is a fellowship with Christ ?

From the same starting point — the S.C.M. member as a member of Christ's Body — we have also tried to understand pastoral care. If every believer is a priest, then the S.C.M. member is called to participate in a pastoral ministry as well as an evangelistic ministry.

Likewise, from an understanding of being members of Christ's Body, we can usefully answer some of the underlying theological questions of personal witness and pastoral work : for example, the understanding of human need contained in this sentence from a Federation document on pastoral care : "We have not only to minister to needs already felt, but to preach a Gospel which uncovers needs."

THE RESULTS OF THE DISCUSSION SO FAR

Pulling this discussion together, what do we seem to have ?

First, a widespread sense of dissatisfaction with abstract witness.

Second, a conviction that "personal" witness is required.

Third, a growing clarity that the heart of witness is conversion of life : a change of direction initiated by and turning around the concrete demand with which Jesus Christ confronts each man in his particular situation.



He began to wash the disciples' feet. ... He came to Simon Peter ; and Peter said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet ?" Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not know now, but afterward you will understand." Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part in me." John 13 : 5-8.

"We have not only to minister to needs already felt, but to preach a Gospel which uncovers needs."

Fourth, the suggestion that only by getting three things into the right relation — conversion, witness, nurture — do we have a clear understanding of our reason for existence as an S.C.M.

Fifth, a conviction that the breadth of witness needs to be maintained, at the same time that we concentrate on “deepening” the faith of those who bear witness.

Sixth, growing clarity that Christian nurture happens in the life of the Body of Christ, and that the S.C.M. requires greater clarity, therefore, on its relation to the Church, and on the role of church membership in S.C.M. life.

Seventh, in all this, a spotlighting of the student *member*, the basic unit of the Federation, as the man in whom the “reason for existence” of the S.C.M. — conversion, witness, nurture — is realized, or not at all.

Leila Giles has written about pastoral care words which, in a larger sense, summarize the discussion about personal witness: “We should be clear that what we are discussing is not a new ‘concern’. It is something central to all our work: something practical, about which action must be taken, perhaps in some aspects in a rather simple way. It helps us to see new ‘dimensions’ of the political, ecumenical, theological, university concerns. But it is significant that the word ‘dimension’ has been taken up and used so widely in this context. Our pastoral task, like our task of evangelism, of which it is a vital part, is something by which other things are measured.”

The cover and the drawings on pages 37 and 57 are by the French artist, Pillods, from a series entitled *Images des Evangiles*.

The illustration on page 47 is from *Gymnasisten*, the publication of the Swedish S.C.M. in Schools; that on page 43 is from the *Sonntagsblatt*, a German Protestant newspaper.

The drawing on page 51 is used with the permission of the Church Missionary Society.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO ONE ANOTHER

PHILIPPE MAURY

During the past sixty years, the Federation, and its member Movements along with it, have developed a rather standard program of activities. They have discovered the most effective methods of carrying on this program, and from time to time they make an effort to redefine their essential purpose. Most Student Christian Movements build their activities around group Bible study, and in discussion groups as well as practical action concern themselves with Christian responsibility for men in society, political life and international relations, for culture and science, and more especially for the university. They try to provide their members with a satisfactory amount of doctrinal teaching, and this in most cases leads them to face the scandal of church division, and thus to think again about the call of God to membership in the Church and to working for its unity. Finally, at the present stage of Federation history, there seems to be among Student Christian Movements everywhere in the world a growing effort to rediscover the fullness and centrality of their Christian calling, their *raison d'être* as S.C.M.s, which is the task of evangelism, of reaching beyond the present membership of the Christian community.

THE MEANING OF "EVANGELISM"

It is precisely at this point that we must ask certain questions of ourselves. What do we mean by evangelism? How is this basic purpose related to the various activities included in an S.C.M. program? If we are not able to express more clearly what we mean by this word, we are simply indulging in pious platitudes. Indeed, not so long ago this word "evangelism" would have sounded in the ears of many S.C.M. members in different parts of the world like nothing but a pious platitude, and there are still groups who do not like the term.

Nevertheless, forgetting for the moment the question of vocabulary, let us try to discover what kind of Christian responsibility we refer to when we use this word, and why we think it is our responsibility. If we take seriously the word "evangelism", it implies first that our attention is focused, not upon ourselves, but upon something far beyond us, something which we do not own, but something which claims to control us. We are pointing towards something beyond

man and his world, indeed towards *Someone* who is the content of this Evangel, this Good News, which is the substance of our Christian witness. We are pointing towards Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life, not *our* way, *our* truth and *our* life, but *the* Way, *the* Truth and *the* Life which God has given for and to all men. We are pointing towards a message valid for everyone, even for those who do not yet know it, even for those who ignore it or reject it.

TWO FOCUSES : GOD'S TRUTH AND MEN'S LIVES

When we speak of evangelism as our primary responsibility, we imply also that the *raison d'être* of an S.C.M. is not the well-being of its members but this message which is not only for its members but — let us deal only with the university, our field of work — for all students. Our concern can never be limited to doing something for those inside our fellowship : it is limited only by the number of people with whom we can make contact. In other words, in fulfilling this task of witness, of evangelism, we are led to become the living bond or bridge between two realities with which we must be equally concerned — Jesus Christ, our living Lord and Saviour, and these many men and women among whom God has placed us. Our action must be determined by two focuses — God's truth and men's lives.

Now it seems to me that as students, as people who are accustomed to think, to deal with ideas and truths, we are often inclined to forget about the second of these two focuses. We are apt, for instance, to do a good job of Bible study from the point of view of historical analysis and doctrinal definition. We honestly try to find out what the truth of God is, but we are likely to pay less attention to what this truth means for us, and particularly to what it means for other people. At best, we try to understand its meaning for us personally, its ethical requirements, its cultural implications, even the fact that if it is fully understood it must be passed on. We wish to be good Christians ; we wish not only to hear the Word of God but also to put it into practice ; therefore we strive for more moral behaviour, an intellectual life purified from secular idolatries, service to God in the field of politics, even for obedience at the point of faithful evangelism. And still there is something lacking in our understanding : even if nothing else demonstrated this, we know from bitter experience how our witness does not come home to other students. I am inclined to think that the reason for this failure lies precisely in our neglect of that second focus of the Christian life : we are not really concerned with our neighbour, with other men and women, with other students.

"THE ONE THING NEEDFUL"

This criticism may appear unfair to many. Is it really true that we are not concerned with one another? How could we deserve such a criticism when we try earnestly to study the truth of God and acknowledge it as universally valid, when we try so hard to improve the life of our universities, when we try to fight against social and political evils, when we try to serve one another through material relief, when we really try to become Christian witnesses? I do not deny our good intentions, or our real efforts, but is it true to say that these intentions and efforts have lacked "the one thing needful"? It is not enough to work for others. The Bible uses another word to describe what Christian concern for others must be—it speaks of love. It seems to me that our failure in evangelism, as well as at many other points, is a result of our apparent inability to love one another.

I remember the student who some years ago told me of his great distress at his utter failure to share his faith in Jesus Christ with a friend who had been his room-mate for several years. After a little conversation I found out that even though this S.C.M. member spoke of his room-mate as his friend, their relationship had remained on a rather superficial level—they were just good pals. These two students had never begun to be really interested in each other simply as human beings; they had never tried to discover each other's basic interests, problems, expectations and fears; they were willing to help each other in the little matters of everyday life, but neither the Christian nor the other had ever offered, not help in everyday life, but help in the whole of life. I told this Christian student that he really could not expect his witness to be heard and understood when, as a matter of fact, he was speaking to someone who, whether he realized it or not, was a stranger to him. I am convinced that any real evangelism must take as its starting point this elementary human sympathy, and I use the word "sympathy" in its strongest etymological sense: feeling together, suffering together, sharing our existence with another.

THE MEANING OF "CONVERSION"

Our lack of concern for one another does not take the form only of this lack of love. It is also evident in our unformulated expectations about the results of our Christian witness. Too often we seem to want this person to whom we are bringing the good news of Jesus Christ to enter upon a new life simply by entering the Church, by taking a new view of his relationships with other men, by developing a different conception of his job, and by accepting different moral standards.

These changes are, of course, all essential. But what about the basic change, what the New Testament calls "new birth"? What about the good biblical word "conversion", which has almost completely disappeared from our S.C.M. vocabulary? Why is it that we have almost stopped thinking in terms of conversion, of a radical reorientation of our life away from what it was naturally towards something new? I know the many historical reasons which explain our kind of fear of this word. I know that it has too often been used to describe either a vague emotionalism or an attitude bordering on a theology of salvation by conversion itself. I am grateful that God has given us to rediscover during the recent period of Federation history that, apart from any achievement on our part, *He* saves, *He* justifies, *He* redeems; to rediscover that Christianity is not something of the heart or soul only, but of the whole human being; that it is not something concerning the individual alone, but fundamentally concerning the community of the Church — that we cannot believe except within the Church.

But it would be disastrous for us to go from one extreme to the other, to cast out one unclean spirit only to make room for seven others more wicked than the first. There is certainly a need for S.C.M.s today to emphasize anew this element of individual change, this answer of the heart as well as of the mind, the importance of the personal decision which the word "conversion" represents. This does not mean that we should start the pendulum swinging back, but rather that we should continue our efforts to understand better what God expects of us. To speak of conversion as the personal decision of man does not rule out the full sufficiency of God's grace. It simply calls us to recognize that God's grace expresses itself in our answer, in our commitment. As Paul said, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (this is conversion), "for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do" (this is God's ever-sufficient grace). To emphasize the need for individual conversion is not, either, to rule out the primary importance of the Church, of the community; we can worship God, confess our faith in Him, obey Him only within this community. But what would the Church be with only its Head, Christ, without the loving response of all the members of the Body? Why should we be ashamed of having hearts, of feeling emotion before God and His love? Our hearts are His creation, as well as our minds, and it is as impossible for the Christian to love His Saviour with his mind alone as it is for husband and wife to have for each other a purely platonic affection.

There is, of course, another reason why we do not like to use the word conversion: it seems to imply a once-for-all change in our lives. There is a danger in the expression, "I have been converted". It tends



God with us

to refer to a kind of capital which I have built up and upon which I can draw from now on. Something very important happens, indeed, when for the first time someone believes in Jesus Christ as his Saviour. He then becomes responsible before God in a new and more serious way. He can henceforth always say, "I know in whom I have believed". In this sense a radical first change does take place, but we must immediately add that this first change compels us to change anew every day, to turn away every day from our selfishness and sin, to reorient our lives constantly towards Jesus Christ. Repentance and conversion have almost the same meaning; both are everyday requirements for the Christian. We must be converted anew every day.

WITNESSING TO OUR NEIGHBOUR

This also means that when we bear witness we must hope for and expect the conversion of those to whom the message is addressed, and when we make this personal witness, we must be concerned not only with the proclamation in word and action of the eternal and universal truth of Jesus Christ, but also with *addressing* it in all the fullness of its challenge *to* our neighbour. For God never speaks in a vacuum; His eternity is never alone with itself; He has decided in His love to be God only *for* us, to speak His divine Word only *to* us. That is why our witness, if it truly aims at becoming the Word of God *for* someone else, must be directly *addressed to* him. That is also why a real witness must start from what I have called human sympathy: we cannot address the Word of God to someone who for us is not a fellow human being, but an anonymous entity, of whom we have no real personal knowledge.

PASTORAL CARE

This leads me to a word which has been very much used, and sometimes misused, in Federation meetings and publications in recent years — the word "pastoral". It is a difficult word because historically it has been identified with a particular specialized ministry of the Church. We should recover the sense of its biblical origin, of its reference to Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd. Because Jesus Christ is the Good Shepherd of His sheep, of men, His Church is responsible for a ministry of pastoral care. Another difficulty arises at this point — the confusion of this ministry with one of its more technical aspects, namely, the spiritual and psychological guidance or counselling which some people require when going through a particularly confusing and painful crisis of mind or emotion. Pastoral care is even confused sometimes with a certain kind of psychotherapy.

But it seems to me that pastoral care ought to be conceived of as the very broad and universal responsibility of Christians to help one another on the road of Christian life, of Christian obedience, of this constantly renewed personal conversion. It is indeed part of the general ministry of evangelism, and differs from the task of teaching, to which it is complementary, by being always directed to the particular individual situation of a person rather than to the permanent general truth of God. Neither Christian teacher nor Christian pastor has anything else to bring than Jesus Christ, but it is a different thing, for instance, to teach the doctrine of Christian marriage as based on the Bible and analysed in church pronouncements, and to try to help someone involved in sexual difficulties of a particular kind.

I have said that these two ministries are complementary to each other. They are so complementary, that in most cases they overlap, and it becomes very difficult, very artificial, to make a distinction between them. There is no teaching of the Christian truth, except perhaps in written form, which is not addressed to people in a particular situation and aimed at giving them practical guidance and comfort in their predicaments. On the other hand, there is no pastoral help which does not consist in the proclamation to someone in his particular situation of the fundamental truth of Christ's forgiveness and new life.

THE PASTORAL TASK OF THE S.C.M.

It is, however, essential for us to be aware of this dual ministry, not so much that we may specialize in only one aspect of it — though in any community there is room and need for specialization in service, and this is certainly true of the S.C.M. — but in order that we may never forget either of these two focuses of Christian evangelism which I have mentioned. At the present time, when in S.C.M. life we have been giving so much emphasis to the university and culture, to political and social questions, to theology and church doctrine, it is good to emphasize, not as a separate concern but rather as an intrinsic aspect of any Christian concern or service, this pastoral task. It is good for us to remember that these students, for whom God has made us responsible, are not simply mind and intelligence, but men and women with many difficulties and needs which are sometimes only remotely influenced by intellectual factors. It is good that our Christian task in the university should be described not only as the proclamation within and towards this university of God's truth, but also as the loving service which we owe to one another at every stage of our progress on the road of Christian faith and life, and even before we have set foot on this road.

The community of the S.C.M. must be both the community brought together by a common faith and the community in need of strengthening in this faith. The S.C.M. must be the place where anyone, Christian or not, can come with the certainty both of hearing the objective truth of Jesus Christ and of receiving help in his personal difficulties, whether material, intellectual or spiritual. It will thus be an open community. It will be open in the sense that it will avoid like the plague pharisaism, that attitude of superiority towards those outside, towards those who do not share our faith or our morals. It will be open in the other sense that each of its members will try to have an open heart and mind, and this means first having open ears to all other members.

EVANGELISM IN THE S.C.M.

It is not likely that an S.C.M. which tries to be this sort of community, to carry on this evangelistic task, to be concerned with conversion as well as truth, with pastoral care as well as doctrinal instruction and Bible study, will have to change the content of its program a great deal. When I speak of evangelism, of conversion, of pastoral care, I am not referring to something different, separate or additional to the traditional elements of an S.C.M. program described at the beginning of this article. Evangelism does not mean some mysterious reality which is completely different from our moral life, our political and social interest, our intellectual problems. To evangelize means to proclaim how Jesus Christ forgives and renews the life of the men and women we are, involved in ethical, political, social and cultural affairs. I would even say that these natural earthly preoccupations of students should provide us with the language we can use to bring the Gospel to them, the point of contact at which human sympathy and then witness can occur. Conversion does not mean reorienting our lives towards Christ and away from sin, queerly conceived as having nothing to do with our daily behaviour; Christ calls us to change our whole lives, moral, social, political and intellectual, as well as those more hidden aspects which we carefully keep to ourselves. And pastoral care itself does not mean guidance given and received at some higher level of existence than our daily affairs; it is guidance very practically given and received in our most ordinary problems, as well as in the ultimate questions underlying them.

How can an S.C.M. become this sort of S.C.M.? I could describe a number of things which have to be done, but it seems to me that each one of us must undertake a personal self-examination to find out what is wrong and how it can be changed. More basically, I would say that methods are of very limited importance. The essential

thing is this constant examination: an examination of the Word of God, that we may hear through it who Christ is; an examination of the human community in which we live, that we may not only know it but love it and those who, with us, live in it; an examination of ourselves, that we may really become what we are called to be — a true manifestation of God's people, the Church, in the university, and a true bond between Jesus Christ and those who, whether they know it or not, belong to Him.

*Adam,
where
art
thou?*



PASTORAL ISSUES AMONG STUDENTS

A Study Outline by LEILA GILES

Reference Material * : *The Student World*, I, 1954.

The Student World, III, 1954.

"Pastoral Care", a document produced in 1954 by the W.S.C.F.

I. THE STARTING POINT : a) HUMAN NEEDS

When we think of the task of the S.C.M. in a university, the word "evangelism" is generally the one which springs first to our minds. The question which confronts us is whether, when we speak of "spreading the Good News", we are really thinking of spreading it in the way Our Lord Himself did. If we read the accounts of His ministry, we see that much of what He did was called forth by concrete cases of need : a blind man by the roadside, a hungry multitude, some empty wine jars — "that the works of God might be made manifest" (John 9 : 3). The question we ask ourselves here is whether we are not walking around our universities with our eyes shut, both to our own needs and to those of others, and whether we have been pretending that the only important thing about a student is his mind, and that our only business with him is to help resolve his intellectual problems. This study should help us to open our eyes.

QUESTIONS

1. Needs have been defined as "broken relationships". With whom (what people, what communities) is the student related? (e.g. home, university, society, etc.). At what point, do tensions exist?
2. What do you consider to be the right relationship between unmarried people of different sexes? Is this achieved in your university?
3. If students are anxious, what are they generally anxious about? Does university life help or hinder their adjustment to the tensions of life?
4. Is it true that students in your university are lonely? If they are, why are they?
5. Would you say that there is any difference, as far as the existence of these problems is concerned, between those students who are members of the S.C.M. and those who are not?

* We have given here only the material produced recently by the Federation. There is more available, and students in each country should be able to assemble a small library for those who use this study.

6. Do you very often encounter discontented graduates? Why are they discontented? Is it the university's fault, society's fault, their own fault? Do you think it is difficult to talk genuinely of "vocation" in the modern world? Why?

II. THE STARTING POINT : b) THE GOSPEL

Reference Material : See the articles by Francis House and André Dumas in *The Student World*, I, 1954.

Jesus did not always accept human need in the terms in which it was presented to Him. When the Samaritan woman asked him for water (John 4), He went on to tell her that He would give her water, but not of the kind she expected. And then He unmasked her sin — "for thou hast five husbands and he whom thou hast is not thy husband". That was part of the process which finally awakened her faith.

So evangelism is not just supplying the needs of which people are already conscious. It also tells them about something and Someone different, who will require a recasting of their whole system of allegiance. There is no pastoral care without authority — and the authority is that of Christ Himself.

This pastoral responsibility belongs to us all ; we are all "priests" charged with the care of one another. And this care is to be carried out on Christ's terms within the framework set by Him. Thus *our* analysis of need always has to be seen in the light of His : for example, broken relationships may not be able to be mended until the factor of sin within them has been recognized.

Care of this sort is costly. It can only be carried out in prayer and in a genuine spirit of sacrifice, and willingness to suffer for others. It rests on faith in the Supreme Pastor, Christ, and His power to overcome sin, to create hope in the most hopeless situations, and to give those who try to serve Him strength to rest on His judgment rather than on the judgment of men. It is, in fact, the working out in most practical terms of the Gospel.

QUESTIONS

1. "Woe unto me if I preach not the Gospel." Is care for people directly or only indirectly connected with preaching the Gospel?
2. If the Gospel is "Good News", why are so few people interested in it? Is it Good News for everyone?
3. In St. John's Gospel the Holy Spirit is called "The Comforter", but at the same time He is said to be the one who "convicts us of sin" (John 16 : 7-8). How do you reconcile these two functions? Have they anything to do with our own witness?

4. "Unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness" (I Cor. 1 : 23). Do we sometimes create stumbling blocks by not preaching the whole Gospel ? What are legitimate stumbling blocks and what are some false ones ?
5. What do you understand by "pastoral care" ?
6. "Salvation", "sin", "forgiveness", "peace", "liberation", "hope": what do these biblical words mean to you ? How could you explain your understanding of them to others ?

III. THE S.C.M. COMMUNITY

Reference Material : The report of Commission III of the W.S.C.F. Consultation on "The S.C.M. in the World".

Everyone who has been a member of an S.C.M. community must have been accused at least once of being a member of a "ghetto" ! And, however bad his conscience may have been when he was thus accused, he probably had at least a lingering doubt in his mind as to whether he was not somehow entitled to his life in the Christian community, whether in fact his contribution to this community life was not an important part of his discipleship.

Certainly it seems impossible to solve this problem simply by dissolving the community. Yet we hear it said that there are many students whose experience of the failure of other communities (for example, the family) has been so bitter that they are now "community shy". Their attitude to the warm fellowship of which we are often so proud in our S.C.M. groups is one simultaneously of longing and distrust, in which distrust often gets the upper hand. And so people talk of the need for "strong Christian individuals" to go out and stay with such people where they are, simply to be their friends.

Perhaps the root of the "ghetto" problem lies in a false understanding of God's relation to the world. Do we tend to think of ourselves as getting "most favoured nation" treatment from God, and forget that the world outside our groups is as much the sphere of action of His Holy Spirit, and a place where we may hear God talking to us, and see Him in action, as the centrally-heated atmosphere of the S.C.M. ? Is it not true, in fact, that many students who have actually experienced the fellowship of the S.C.M. never find a home in it, but say openly that they prefer some other (for example, in Germany, membership of a student corporation) ?

QUESTIONS

1. What right has the life of the S.C.M. to express itself in a community rather than solely in the action of its members in the various communities (political societies, corporations, faculty groups, etc.) in which they find themselves ?

He is our peace

"The Peace" is passed from hand
to hand in the Communion Service
of the Church of South India



2. "The S.C.M. . . . confesses its secularity as in fact identical with that of all men and human communities" ("The S.C.M. in the World" report, Part I, 1). What does this mean? Do you agree with it?
3. Is it only possible theoretically to say that the S.C.M. community should be at once "open" and "closed"?
4. Should there be any distinctiveness at all about a Christian community? What has the New Testament to say about this?
5. Is loneliness to be avoided at all costs?
6. What part should sex differences play in the S.C.M. community? How in practice does it, or could it, show forth the truth that the unmarried person has a vocation before God?
7. If a student has to choose between a job on an S.C.M. committee and a job on the committee of another student organization, what should he do? Would *your* S.C.M. help him to make his decision?

IV. THE NURTURE OF THE S.C.M. MEMBER

Reference Material: Articles on "Nurture and Witness in the S.C.M." and "Is Counselling Pastoral Care?", *The Student World*, I, 1954.

One of the great things about the S.C.M. is the fact that it enables the work of the Church to be carried on among students by students themselves. Whether or not the group is a *Studentengemeinde*, or has a student chaplain, the work inevitably lies largely in the hands of the

student members. But one risk which the S.C.M. takes in this is that of putting a task into hands which are not yet ready to perform it. There are probably only a few committee members who have ever begun their work without a sinking feeling that they were entirely inadequate for it ! Of course if the group has a chaplain, part of the load is lifted off their shoulders.

But this is not only a problem for committee members. The job of being a Christian in the university is difficult enough in itself, and too often we talk so constantly and idealistically about what the S.C.M. *should* do and say, that we deprive people of the courage to admit that they are just not mature enough, intellectually, or inwardly and emotionally, to do what we say they ought. Many of us have never had proper instruction in the teaching of our church ; most of us have not been taught properly to pray ; all of us have inward needs — doubts, problems, perplexities connected with our own faith and with our dealings with other people — about which we need advice ; we should like to have read much more than we have ; we imagine secretly that we are abnormal when we are going through problems which are probably also secretly troubling the majority of our fellow students ; we have far too little time to do all we know we ought, and we have a perpetually-troubled conscience and an occasional feeling of oppression.

Looked at in one way, our weakness and disabilities are not tragic, and indeed can often be a means through which we find our way to others who have the same difficulties as we do ourselves. But part of the S.C.M.'s work is to minister to those who are young in the faith (because "becoming a Christian" is just the first step along a path which we follow to the end of our lives) "that we may present every man mature in Christ".

QUESTIONS

1. What would you consider the most urgent "pastoral needs" of the Christians in your university ? What about those (for example, professors) who are Christian by profession but are not members of any university Christian group ?
2. What is the role of a student pastor ? How can an S.C.M. group which has no pastor or adviser help itself ?
3. "Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed" (James 5 : 16). Should confession be practised in the S.C.M. ? How would such confession be related to that heard by a minister of the Church and followed by absolution ?
4. What does your S.C.M. do about giving systematic doctrinal teaching to its members ?
5. What problems do students have in their attempts to pray, either corporately or privately ? How could they be helped ? How essential is intercession ? Is it practised in your group ?

6. What good ways have you found of helping S.C.M. members with regular private Bible study and meditation?
7. How can "discipline" be interpreted in a person's life? Is it a negative thing? What are the various parts of our lives where discipline is necessary?

V. WITNESS AND THE PASTORAL DIMENSION

One of the roots of thinking in the Federation about our pastoral task was a strong feeling that the way we were preaching the Gospel was too removed from the real tension points in the lives of modern men for our message to stand much chance of being heard and believed. In our first study we thought of what some of these tension points were. It is clear that the message itself does not change from generation to generation, but the way of presenting it, of finding an inlet and touching the heart, is bound to do so.

We live in a period of pressures, in which people are threatened in their personal existence; questions about the meaning of life are not just academic; on their solution may depend a student's willingness to go on living at all.

So at every point our pastoral task leads us to look for the "dimension" of what we are saying and doing, where personal, as distinct from purely intellectual, issues are involved. This does not mean in any way that we should care less than we did before about honest thinking and the defence of truth: but it is a showing forth of our faith that the Truth came to us as a Person, Jesus Christ.

In his article in *The Student World*, "Pastoral Care and Politics", Bill Stringfellow analyses some of the personal factors involved in participation in politics. We might think as well what some of the personal questions in our "university concern" are; for example, the relationship between student and professor; or how often have we considered, when we were discussing ecumenical questions, the personal problems a student confronts when he wants to change his denomination? And what is the human situation to which we imagine we are speaking when we plan our S.C.M. programs — our worship, public meetings, conferences, etc.? Are we talking to a generation which wants to be interested and diverted, or to one which wants to be saved?

QUESTIONS

1. How could you put content into "the pastoral dimension" of ecumenical, political and university questions within the S.C.M.?
2. What have you learned from this series of studies which might alter your attitudes to the aims of your S.C.M., the planning of its program, and to other people in the university?

CONVERSION

A Study Outline by T. V. PHILIP

The root meaning of the word "conversion" itself is "change of position or relationship, effected by the motion of turning", but in this study we shall not be concerned so much with the word itself as with the teaching of the New Testament about the Christian experience of conversion.

I. THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Jesus came preaching the Kingdom of God and calling men to conversion (Mark 1 : 14-15). The promise is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God has come.

Study the promises about the Kingdom in the Old Testament. At the time of Jesus, Israel was the people of God looking forward to the Kingdom of God. In both the Old and the New Testament the basic idea of the Kingdom is that of the *kingly rule* or *reign of God*. With the coming of Jesus, God's kingly rule has been established. His Lordship has been established in all areas of life. The idea is not of a geographical territory. Those who submit themselves to the rule of God are in the Kingdom of God. "But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1 : 12).

Read Luke 10 : 23, 24 ; 6 : 18-23 ; 11 : 20 ; Mark 3 : 27 ; 2 : 9 ; Matt. 11 : 4-5.

What do the following parables teach about the nature of the kingdom ?

The parable of the sower (Mark 4 : 3-9).

The seed growing secretly (Mark 4 : 26-29).

The mustard seed (Mark 4 : 30-32).

II. ENTERING THE KINGDOM OF GOD — CHRISTIAN CONVERSION

Jesus says, "Repent, for the Kingdom of God has come, and believe in the Gospel."

Jesus' call is to "accept the Kingdom of God", or to "enter into the Kingdom of God", or to "see the Kingdom of God".

Read Mark 10 : 23-27 ; 9 : 43-47 ; Acts 14 : 22 ; John 3 : 3 ; Luke 14 : 15. Note in Mark 10 : 17, 23, 26, 30, "inherit eternal life", "enter

the Kingdom of God", and "to be saved" are three ways of saying the same thing.

Christian conversion means accepting the Kingdom of God or entering into the Kingdom of God. Can you put these terms into ordinary modern speech?

III. HOW CONVERSION TAKES PLACE

The Kingdom is *a gift of God*, and not man's achievement. *Conversion is an act of God*. It is not by our efforts that we enter into the Kingdom. We are converted in spite of ourselves.

Read Luke 12 : 32 ; Acts 5 : 31 ; 11 : 18 ; Romans 2 : 4 ; II Timothy 2 : 25 ; Eph. 2 : 5-9.

Mark 10 : 27 : "with men it is impossible, all things are possible with God".

John 3 : 5-8 : the Spirit's action is as independent of human action as that of the wind.

Man's response — *repent and believe* (conversion includes both).

Read Acts 3 : 19 ; Luke 13 : 1-9.

In Jesus' teaching in the New Testament the prophetic requirement that repentance should be sincere — "rend your heart and not your garments" — is deepened and made essential to the entry into the Kingdom. This was in strong contrast to the current Pharisaic religion, which stressed outward observances rather than inward turning (Mark 7 : 5-14 ; Luke 18 : 9-14). But it was John the Baptist who had first revived the prophetic call of repentance, making repentance a condition of escape from judgment at hand.

Read Matt. 3 : 1-12 ; Matt. 4 : 17.

In how far is the preaching of Jesus the same as that of John the Baptist? In how far is it different?

Read also Revelation 2 : 5, and note that repentance is the key word of the message to the seven churches.

From Luke 18 : 9-14, what do you think of the radical meaning of repentance? Repentance means "a change of mind", but in the New Testament it is used in a deeper sense, indicating a deliberate turning, "a coming to one's senses resulting in a change of conduct". Repentance means much more than being sorry for one's misdeeds : it involves the active acceptance of God's gift of faith. Then repentance results in conversion.

Read the story of the prodigal son, Luke 15 : 11-32.

Jesus makes repentance and belief the keynotes of His preaching, thus bringing out the integral connection between repentance and faith. Conversion includes both.

The encounter with Jesus produces both these things in men's hearts. Both are God's gifts.

Read the story of Zacchaeus (Luke 19 : 1-10) ; of the woman who was a sinner (Luke 7 : 36-50) ; of the Samaritans (John 4 : 39-42).

Repentance means turning away from sin, just as faith involves turning to God. Conversion includes both turning away from sin and putting our trust in God.

But the grace being given, effective conversion is conditioned by man's will. The Holy Spirit may be resisted and quenched, or His work may be delayed.

Read Acts 7 : 51 ; 1 Thess. 5 : 19.

IV. CONVERSION MEANS "TO BE BORN FROM ABOVE"

(Jesus and Nicodemus, John 3 : 1-15)

The Greek adverb, translated as 'again' in the Authorized Version and 'anew' in the Revised Version, can mean either "again" or "above".

The birth required is not merely a second birth, but a birth from above, birth of the spirit, birth from God. There is also an emphasis on the newness, the completeness of the life which is given by God Himself.

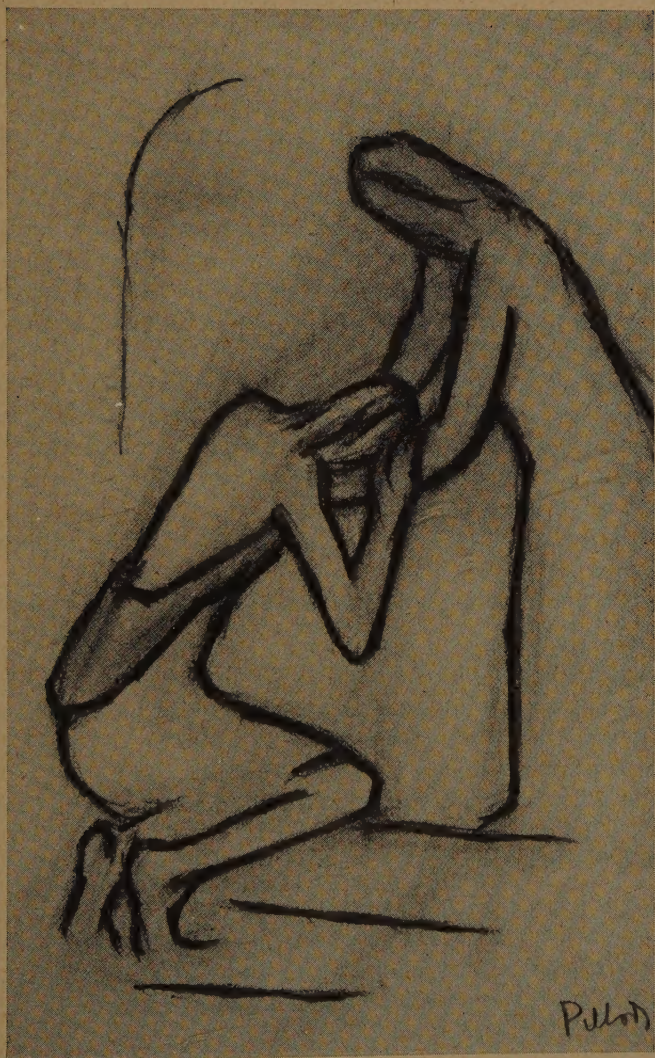
Here also Jesus emphasizes that conversion, or to be born from above, is the way to enter the Kingdom. Apart from this heavenly renewal, all hope of entering the Kingdom of God must be abandoned.

Note the word "must" in verse 7.

How can man be born when he is old ?

He is not necessarily old in years, but in the sense that his habits of life and thought are formed and traditional. The question is : how can he break away from all these ? Can human nature be changed ?

There is a power that can accomplish it, though no man truly can do it for himself. "The wind bloweth . . . So is every one that is born of the spirit" (verse 8). Don't ask for credentials. Don't wait untill you know the source of the wind before you let it refresh you. It offers what you need ; trust yourself to it. Nicodemus is offered, not a new way of becoming a good or religious man, but a new birth there, and then.



*Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you ; I am no longer
worthy to be called your son.*

(Luke 15 : 21)

Conversion means to become a new man in Christ, a new creation ; to die with Christ and to be raised with Him. "Not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Read Rom. 6 : 1-11 ; 7 : 4-6 ; II Cor. 5 : 14-19 ; Gal. 2 : 19-20 ; Eph. 4 : 17-24.

What is involved in conversion is putting away the old man and putting on the new man.

In conversion we appropriate the reconciliation to God brought about by God in Christ. We experience a sense of forgiveness of our past sins, and receive the assurance that we are His children and that His Holy Spirit is always available for us to help us in our spiritual life.

In the Epistle to the Romans (1 : 16-17), St. Paul speaks of the righteousness of God. This righteousness of God is a present reality, and it is already imparted to man in Christ. The believer is not righteous by his own actions, but he is counted as righteous. It is not only a release from the guilt contracted by former sins, but also a release from sinning, a release from the power of sin. His power is given to us to lead us to a life of sanctification.

Read Romans 1 and 2 ; 5 : 1-2 ; 6 : 12-23 ; 7 : 4-25 ; Ephesians 2 : 1-10 ; I John 1 : 8-10.

From the above passages do you think that all men need conversion ?

In conversion there is a definite point of break with the past. The first disciples left all (Mark 1 : 16-20 ; 2 : 14).

"No man who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the Kingdom" (Luke 9 : 57-62).

"No man can serve two masters" (Matt. 6 : 24).

"If any man come after me, let him deny himself . . . and follow me" (Luke 9 : 23).

Read also Luke 14 : 25-33.

Conversion means making a decision for Christ.

In our life we are faced with the ultimate question — either for Christ or for self. Conversion means to decide for Christ, and to decide for Christ is to sacrifice everything else for Him.

Read Luke 11 : 31-32.

"Behold a greater than Solomon is here . . . behold a greater than Jonah is here." "Blessed is he who shall find no occasion of stumbling in me" (Matt. 11 : 6). Can you translate this into practical terms in the life of a student ? in your own life ?

Read the story of the rich young ruler (Mark 10 : 17-22).

Conversion is not only a break with the old but a relationship with the new. It is only when we decide for Christ that we really enter into life. Conversion is "entering into life". Does this phrase have any reality for you? Where is this new life to be seen? in the feelings? the mind? the way of living? elsewhere?

Jesus says: "Let the dead bury their dead." Those who have not decided for Christ are dead people, and their business is to bury the dead. They have nothing to do with life.

Read John 3: 36; 4: 14; 6: 34; 6: 40, 51; 11: 23-26; Romans 6: 23.

Conversion involves also incorporation into the Body of Christ.

Read Acts 2: 41; Rom. 6: 3; I Cor. 12: 13.

"Born of water and spirit." Is this a reference to the rite of baptism?

There is no gap between the experience of conversion and the experience of joining the fellowship of the Church. The two are the inward and outward forms of one fact. Reconciliation with God is, at the same time, reconciliation with God's people.

QUESTIONS

1. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born anew he cannot see the Kingdom of God." What does it mean to be a Christian?
2. What are the various factors that led to the conversion of St. Paul (Acts 9 and other passages)? Can many factors be operative in one's decision to embark on a Christian life? Is a culminating point always necessary? Is conversion a definite act necessarily referable to some exact time and place?
3. Is such an act of conversion effected once and for all? Is it capable of repetition? Or are we to repent and believe every moment?
4. How would you explain to a non-Christian the Christian experience of conversion, or the experience of "being saved"?
5. How far is conversion the work of the Holy Spirit? How far does it depend on our will? Can we convert anyone?
6. Do our S.C.M. activities help students to make a decision for Christ? What has been your experience?

INTERCESSIONS

Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world ; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

O Lord Jesus Christ, in whom is the life which is the light of men, the true light which enlighteneth every man, shine forth upon the world ; open the blind eyes that have not seen thee, or having seen thee have not recognized thee. Shine into our hearts to show us in thy face the light of the knowledge of the glory of God.

We pray especially for our fellow students ; for those who doubt or oppose thee ; for those who, even though in need, cannot believe ; for those who in ignorance ridicule thee ; for those who seek and do not find ; that all may be drawn to thy feet to find their true life.

* * *

Jesus said to them . . . , "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

O thou great Shepherd of the sheep, our Saviour Jesus Christ, who didst show thy love for us on the Cross, we pray for all those who are wandering, with no sense of direction and without a shepherd. We pray for all who are tempted and repeatedly give in ; for those who are shaken by their guilt but are unable to rid themselves of it ; for those who have no real friends and are held safe in no community ; for those who cannot repent ; for those who are disillusioned and those who seek love and do not find it ; for the puzzled and the weary.

Strengthen us, O Lord, who are ourselves weak and helpless, that under thy guidance and in the power of thy Spirit, we may run beside our brothers and learn to love them as thou didst love us.

* * *

Jesus answered them . . . , "I am the bread of life . . . I am the living bread which came down from heaven ; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever ; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh."

O thou who art the Light who leadest us, the Shepherd who careth for us, and the Bread who nourisheth us, thou who feedest thy children with the true manna, the living bread from heaven, grant, we beseech thee, that this precious food may be our support throughout our earthly pilgrimage until we reach that land where there is neither hunger nor thirst ; we ask this in thy Name. Amen.